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ABSTRACT

In 1994, the Nebraska Articulation Planning Team (NAPT) was created to investigate opportunities for establishing horizontal and vertical articulation, curriculum integration, and staff development in the state to provide students with seamless pathways in their movement along the educational continuum. During the 1994-95 academic year, NAPT undertook an articulation pilot project to determine the extent to which articulation was taking place in the state, to identify barriers to articulation, and to develop a model for statewide articulation applicable to most curricular areas. The model that was developed is designed to assist institutions in evaluating courses and programs to determine appropriateness and relevancy of content, establishing vertical and horizontal articulation between all educational levels, and working towards acceptance of course competencies, instead of course titles, as the criteria for measuring student achievement. The model includes the following steps in undertaking articulation efforts: (1) secure the commitment of leaders of institutions involved; (2) create and articulation committee; (3) identify courses and programs to be articulated; (4) develop an intent to articulate agreement; (5) develop course fact sheets for articulation review; (6) develop an articulation agreement; and (7) evaluate the effectiveness of the agreement by gathering data on student success or failure in articulated programs. (BCY)

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MOVING FROM SEEMLESS TO SEAMLESS PATHWAYS FOR STUDENTS

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Richard A. Ross

Richard Ross is Dean of the General Education Division at Southeast Community College - Lincoln, Nebraska campus. He has held this position for the past three years. Richard also has 14 years of high school mathematics teaching experience.

At Southeast Community College, Mr. Ross has been involved in developing and implementing the academic transfer program on the Lincoln campus. In addition to the academic transfer program, the developmental education program and general education classes for the 26 vocational/technical programs at SCC are delivered through the General Education Division Development Education Program.

In previous positions, Richard has been active in both professional and civic organizations, serving as chair of the library board, President of the Chamber of Commerce, President of the Belleville Teachers Association, and President of the Lion Club in Belleville, Kansas. While in Overland Park, Kansas, he was an active member of the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce and was selected to participate in Leadership Overland Park.

Richard currently serves as the community college representative for the Nebraska Mathematics and Science Frameworks Advisory Board, Southeast Community College Tech Prep Project Advisory Board and the Nebraska Articulation Planning Team.

Mr. Ross holds degrees from Emporia State University and Louisiana State University. He is also a 1995 graduate of the National Academic Chair Academy.

Glennis A. McClure

Glennis McClure is the Area Tech Prep Project Coordinator for the S.E. Nebraska Tech Prep Consortium. Southeast Community College is her employer as the fiscal agent of the Tech Prep Project funds. Glennis has been with Southeast Community College since 1989, starting as an instructor in the Agriculture Business and Management Program on the Beatrice campus. She has been coordinating Tech Prep project activities since January 1992. The Tech Prep consortium in Southeast Nebraska currently includes twenty-two active school districts and all three campuses of Southeast Community College.

Glennis has held memberships in the National Tech Prep Network, American Vocational Association, and American Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. She is an active member in the Lincoln Chapter of the American Society for Training and Development. This May, Glennis will finish her Master's Degree at the University of Nebraska- Lincoln in Adult and Vocational Education with a Human Resource Development emphasis. She serves her local public school district as Co-chair of the School Improvement Steering Committee and is also active in her church and a local extension club.

Through her Tech Prep work and as a representative from Southeast Community College, Mrs. McClure is an advisor for the S.E. Nebraska Math Science Coalition, the Lincoln School-to-Work Project and a Carl Perkins Consortium of schools. She was an initial co-leader of the Nebraska Articulation Planning Team.

Glennis received her Bachelor Degree from the University of Nebraska - Lincoln in Agricultural Economics. She has completed training programs from The Grantsmanship Center and the Covey Leadership Center.

OVERVIEW

Education reform initiatives such as School-to-Work transition and Tech Prep, as well as renewed emphasis on college admission standards, teacher certification, and accreditation have brought to the forefront the crucial need for creating a seamless educational pathway for all students.

Consequently, proactive involvement in the development of a statewide articulation model is extremely important. The following goals have been identified:

- evaluating courses and programs to determine appropriateness and relevancy of content and methodology,
- establishing horizontal and vertical articulation between and among all levels of educational institutions, and
- producing a skilled workforce to meet the needs of demanding occupations in the 90s and beyond.

In addition to the above goals, which are part of the strategic plan for a statewide Tech Prep articulation model, four task force members attended The Seamless Web Project conference hosted by the National Community College Chair Academy in February 1994. Information gained from this conference was a valuable guide in getting started in the model development process.

Believing that education has "NAPT" too long, the Nebraska Articulation Planning Team was created to investigate the opportunities and barriers for establishing the horizontal and vertical articulation, curriculum integration, and staff development imperative in assuring students a seamless pathway in their movement along the educational continuum.

NAPT Premise. Education **must** focus on student learning. It is, therefore, important for everyone to acknowledge that education is **one large system** and that planning requires collaboration across institutions. A change in one part of the system, like admissions requirements, affects all parts; consequently, planning can no longer simply be done at the institutional level.

NAPT Goal. To establish a model that can be used statewide by all levels of educational institutions to help them establish educational plans which will provide the opportunity for every student to make informed choices regarding their educational and occupational goals. These plans will be of assistance to learners at any level of educational development as well as those who may decide to change their educational and /or occupational goals. In addition, the model will assist educational institutions in minimizing the barriers that students may encounter as they move from one institution to another.

NAPT Beliefs:

1. Every learner has the right to make informed choices about their own education.
2. All learners, including their parents, guardians, and/or significant others, must have access to current and correct information when making informed educational choices.
3. All educational institutions, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary, have the right to establish admission, completion, and/or graduation requirements, based upon established goals of individual institutions.
4. Every learner must have reasonable access to information regarding individual institutional admission, articulation, and graduation requirements.
5. Every learner must have access to information regarding what educational responsibilities they must fulfill in order to attain personal educational and occupational goals.
6. Educational institutions at all levels must work together if the educational opportunities are to be maximized for all learners in achieving their educational goals.
7. Educational institutions must work together to remove unnecessary barriers that may impede learners from accomplishing their educational goals.
8. Persons of all races, ages, religions, cultures, socioeconomic conditions, and educational backgrounds, both female and male, must have equal access to information regarding the course of study they must follow in order to attain their educational or occupational goals.
9. All learners proceed at different rates of educational growth. Attainment of a certain age neither guarantees a level of accomplishment nor does it prevent the pursuit of educational or occupational goals.
10. Educational institutions have the right to grant placement for students based upon previous education, life experience, or individual abilities.

NAPT Members included representation from several educational institutions located in and around the Lincoln, Nebraska vicinity: Southeast Community College, University of Nebraska - Lincoln, Doane College and Lincoln Public Schools

Articulation Pilot Project. NAPT conducted an articulation pilot project during the 1994-95 academic year. The purpose of the project was:

- To determine the extent to which articulation among the participating educational institutions is currently taking place.

- To jointly identify and address barriers that negatively impact student movement along the educational continuum, e.g.
    - communication (or lack of) across institutions
    - level of credentials of faculty members
    - transcripts showing a letter grade or credit by waiver
    - inconsistent course titles
    - identification of student's knowledge level
    - time
    - distrust

- To communicate the findings and recommendations of the Articulation Pilot Project to leaders at all educational levels throughout the State.

- To develop a model for statewide articulation that could apply to most curricular areas.

- To establish a basis for dialogue among leaders at all educational levels throughout the State for creating seamless K-phD educational pathways.

By June, 1995, the pilot project had reached step five of the articulation process (noted in the articulation model). The definite articulation agreement format for step six is nearing completion. As noted in step seven of the model, effectiveness of the articulation agreements should be evaluated. Therefore, validation of the articulation model could span a period of years.

Information gathered to date from a mathematics pilot project was used to create the following Nebraska Articulation Model.

NEBRASKA ARTICULATION MODEL

Developed by the Nebraska Articulation Planning Team

Premise. Education **must** focus on student learning. It is, therefore, important to acknowledge that education is **one large system** and that planning requires collaboration across institutions. A change in one part of the system, like admissions requirements, affects all parts; consequently, planning can no longer simply be done at the institutional level.

Purpose of this Model. to assist educational institutions in minimizing the barriers students encounter as they move from one institution to another by:

(1) evaluating courses and programs to determine appropriateness and relevancy of content and methodology,

(2) establishing horizontal and vertical articulation between and among all levels of educational institutions, and

(3) work towards acceptance of course competencies as the criteria for measuring student achievement in lieu of course titles.

STEPS IN THE ARTICULATION PROCESS

Step #1 SECURE COMMITMENT OF LEADERS

Identify the educational institutions to be involved in the articulation. Obtain the commitment of their leaders to participate and ask them to identify key person(s) in their organization to serve on the articulation committee.

Step #2 CREATE AN ARTICULATION COMMITTEE

The articulation committee should include secondary and postsecondary administrators, teachers and counselors from each participating institution as well as other key representatives who may be involved in curriculum review or development. They should plan to meet at least monthly for 6-12 months.

Step #3 IDENTIFY COURSES/PROGRAMS TO BE ARTICULATED

The articulation committee should identify what courses, sequence of courses, or programs are to be articulated.

Step #4 DEVELOP INTENT TO ARTICULATE AGREEMENT

An intent to articulate agreement establishes the parameters for the articulation process. Signatures on these agreements indicate a formal commitment to work together through the process.

Step #5 COMPLETE COURSE FACT SHEETS FOR ARTICULATION REVIEW

The articulation committee should meet with teachers and curriculum specialists for the courses/programs designated for articulation to review and analyze course information. The Course Fact Sheet for Articulation Review should be used for recording current course information at both the secondary and postsecondary level. A comparison of these Course Fact Sheets must then be done to determine where articulation is feasible and/or to assess how the course(s) must be modified to make articulation possible.

Step #6 DEVELOP ARTICULATION AGREEMENT

An articulation agreement confirms the parameters for articulation as well as establishes the specific courses at both the secondary and postsecondary institution which are being articulated. Signatures on these agreements indicate a commitment on the part of all parties to assuring students a seamless pathway in their movement along the educational continuum.

Step #7 EVALUATE EFFECTIVENESS

Periodic review of the conditions and courses listed in the articulation agreement is necessary due to possible changes at one or both institutions. In addition, articulation reviews after implementation may reveal needed changes in the process or the final agreement. Indicators of success or validation questions should be identified in the articulation process. Data regarding student success/failure with the articulated arrangement should be collected. Here is an example of the types of questions you may want to ask:

What evidence of success has the high school observed as a result of implementing articulated courses with the postsecondary institution?
___*Improved student motivation to learn*
___*Improved teacher motivation for instruction*
___*Higher achievement of students*
___*Improved standardized test scores of students*
___*Increased enrollment levels in courses that have been articulated*
What evidence of success has the postsecondary institution observed as a result of articulation agreements with high schools?
___*Improved student motivation to learn*
___*Improved teacher motivation for instruction*
___*Students are succeeding with acceptable performance in advanced level courses*
___*Higher achievement of students*
___*Students electing to take additional courses for advanced skill development in lieu of the introductory courses they were advanced placed out of*

After necessary data collection is completed, an articulation review may reveal needed action for change in the articulation procedures or present agreements. Meetings should be documented. Files with agreement information must be kept current.